



Geoffrey Sparks,
 Founder and CEO

Sparx Systems: 'Architecting' Agile Enterprises

By Brian Jackson

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ith the rapid evolution of technology, around 50 percent of new businesses in America make it to their fifth year, according to the U.S. Bureau for Labor Statistics. But among those businesses, IT companies have the lowest chance of surviving. Why is that? Sparx Systems, in many ways, has the answer to that question, as they have pieced together a solution to the challenge of longevity in the rapid, technology-driven BPM sector and the tech world at large.

According to Geoffrey Sparks, Founder and CEO of Sparx Systems, even the perception that newer technologies are always better is subject to question. "The mistaken belief that new technologies are somehow simpler and more self-correcting, can quickly lead to project failures or cost over-runs," explains the CEO. This is why Sparx Systems has hardwired innovation to the core of Enterprise Architect, their 17-year-old modeling and design platform, and the experience works to their advantage.

With Enterprise Architect, Sparx Systems delivers cloud-based models, strong support for a rather large list of open and interoperative data standards and a highly-scalable model repository that provides their end users with a competitive advantage. Throughout this story, we will cover what makes Enterprise Architect so special and how the robust platform has made Sparx Systems an industry leader that's constantly promoting growth and change.

Exploring the Capabilities of Enterprise Architect

“Our flagship product, Enterprise Architect's development is driven by user-defined needs, industry standards, emerging technologies, as well as the unique combination of Sparx Systems' deep understanding of the development process and tools, and the knowledge of how they are applied,” elaborates Sparks. The result of this is a product that facilitates enterprises to address a number of challenges ranging from complexity and cost to efficiency, visibility, deployment, optimal process design, future planning, and accuracy.

To date, Enterprise Architect's extensive development history has resulted in a comprehensive list of tools and features. The platform supports open

BPSim and cost-based optimization. It offers a highly scalable model repository that supports distributed development, and provides users with a wide range of searchable, cross-domain, team-based models. “Enterprise Architect is also designed to deliver basic and advanced simulation features through automated walk-throughs that confirm the behavior of these processes, optimizes them and helps maximize their effectiveness,” explains the Sparx Systems Founder.

Users also have the ability to verify and optimize multi-layered process graphs. This modeling platform facilitates collaboration, offering support for customer reviews, team-based reviews and discussion about model elements and design with feedback from the stakeholders. Enterprise Architect users can easily test processes using an integrated test management system and plan using Time-Aware models that support multiple versions of the same process at different points in time, storing them in the cloud to be retrieved for reuse in components or other projects. “Enterprise Architect can be purchased in Corporate, Business and Software Engineering and Ultimate Editions, all of which grant varying levels of capability depending on what the customer actually needs,” states Sparks.

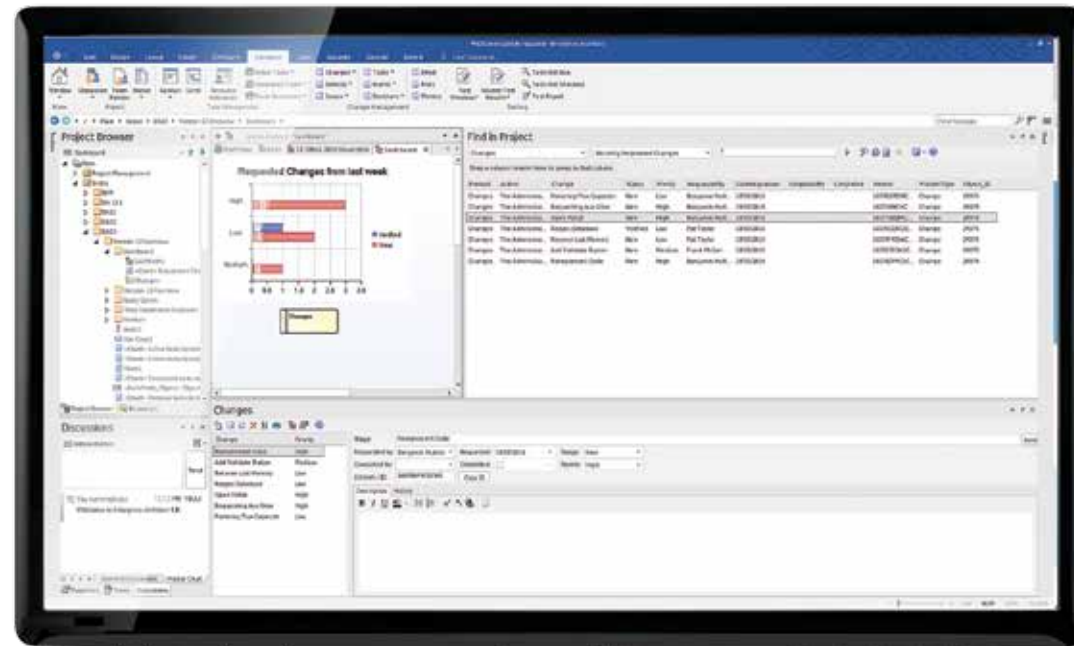


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standards that include BPMN, UML, TOGAF®, UPDM and DMN, as well as interoperative data standards such as NIEM, UBL and CIM in addition to enterprise tools such as BABOK®,

Impacting the Enterprise

While its features are impressive, some might wonder about the benefit it grants to the customer? The licensed users



of Enterprise Architect enjoy myriad benefits, one of which is relevance. Through the platform, they maintain up-to-date tooling and gain access to best practices, while supporting and leveraging industry trends, specifications, and standards. “Customers gain more effective performance by optimizing their solutions for real-world usage, and lend themselves a competitive edge in the process,” Mr. Sparks adds. “With the growth of digital trends like the cloud, users of Enterprise Architect can now say that they support it and other technology trends, all of which really works to maximize their knowledge value and experience in the long-term.”

This kind of pragmatism and value isn't something that's just realized after a purchase either—it's apparent from the moment a client gains an overview of the product. Enterprise Architect is inexpensive, easy to download and can be deployed in a matter of minutes. It has built-in support for a wide range of database management systems types, including Firebird, all editions of Oracle from 9I, SAP ASE, SQLite, DB2®, Interbase, and many more. A free



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Read Only edition is available for their prospective clients, project stakeholders and other relevant stakeholders.

Novice and expert users alike can access the web-based help system, which includes an optional, downloadable library of PDF documents that cover over 4,000 help topics. They can also learn more about Enterprise Architect through the webinars and tutorials on Sparx's website, or attend events such as the London EA User Group in May 2017 and the INCOSE International Symposium.

Staying Informed of the Industry

In many ways, the longevity and edge that Sparx Systems offers their customers is a challenge that they've had to overcome to find success themselves. When Geoffrey Sparks got his start, he was building games for the Commodore 64 and Amiga in the 80s and 90s. He developed an interest in code generators and modeling with pre-UML, Eiffel and other technologies. It was here that he recognized the need to merge project management with modeling for maximum ROI, as well as the value of language extensions. He released Enterprise Architect in 2000, which from day one, was an instant success.

Geoffrey Sparks credits the three major influences of Enterprise Architect as being open standards and technologies, partners and customers, and internal use and innovation. To this day, Sparx Systems maintains a strong rapport with their customers, consultants, trainers and other professional users by seeking feedback and participating in Object Management Group (OMG), The Open Group, and other industry consortia. Sparx Systems places a great value on cross-platform solutions, cloud-based solutions, and web-based knowledge democratization.

Perhaps most important, is the fact that these relationships allow Sparx Systems to approach Enterprise Architect with in-house experience as developers and users. It's because of that experience that they place a strong emphasis on robustness, scalability, reliability and the optimization of processes and software. Sparx Systems uses Enterprise Architect to develop their own software and business processes, track changes, manage testing, manage resources and track daily activities. “Many of the features we implement are based on our own perceived real-world needs in modeling, developing and managing the construction of our tools,” clarifies the Sparx Systems CEO.

The Future of Sparx Systems and Enterprise Architect

For an example of Enterprise Architect rising to a tremendous occasion, look no further than two years ago when US Government-operated Health Insurance exchanges were first established as the result of a legislation passed to lower costs and drive better health outcomes. While the Federal exchange and most of the State exchanges crashed or experienced an excess of problems, one State deployed Enterprise Architect with their exchange development. As a result, they not only avoided all of those problems, but accelerated the development of the exchange and were able to store and reuse the model, as well as foster an ecosystem of live data links between the state-exchange, several insurance vendors, the policy holder's account and several Federal databases.

These types of success stories underscore the value of the technology that Sparx Systems has built over the course of their decade and a half old success. “When you rely on the tool completely to model, build, compile, debug, track, manage, and deploy, it ensures that once we release a beta or a full release, the platform has had many, many hours of real world usage,” elucidates the CEO.

As for the immediate future, the company's roadmap projects Enterprise Architect as a persistent disruptive technology within their rapidly evolving industry, as well as being the first to market, continuing to adopt new standards and placing a great importance upon new and old knowledge. It also includes many technological changes, one of which is the introduction of new professional cloud services later in Q1 2017. Sparx Systems has stayed true to their policies, and are pushing out the Models and Design work in their repositories to “facilitate discussion, testing, resource management, implementation and refinement.” With the mark they've left in the BPM landscape, it's hard to deny the success of their efforts thus far.